

The FORUM

Vol. IV No. 22 1-15 December 1989 (Fortnightly) Rupees Two

Gazette

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Hope For Peace In Punjab

By A.S. Narang

The Verdict

When elections for Lok Sabha in Punjab were announced along with other states, there were two opinions. One, that conditions in Punjab were not conducive for a fair and free election and the second, since solution to Punjab crisis demands rejuvenation of democratic process, not only Parliamentary but also Assembly elections in the state should be held.

After the election results both these opinions claim that their point has been vindicated. According to first view, extremists only by terrorising the people have won elections therefore these cannot be called fair. The second view, however, suggests that not only people by participating in elections have voted for a peaceful solution of the Punjab problem but it has also started the process of bringing the so-called disgruntled elements into the mainstream.

One thing is clear that people of Punjab have clearly voted against the messing up process of the Centre and dithering by established Akali organizations. An analysis of election results clearly shows that in general people have not voted under threats.

The Congress got 26.45 percent votes, though it could retain only 2 seats. Janata Dal contesting only in two seats got 5.45 percent votes. BSP secured 8.8 percent, communists 6 percent, BJP 4.15 percent and independents 9.65 percent. The Mann Akali Dal secured 29.20 percent votes as against the established Akalis 6.6 percent. It clearly shows that people voted for all parties on the basis of traditional loyalties and in view of current situation. Mann group's main chunk thus came from the Akali base.

Another important point is that all the six victorious candidates of the Akali Dal (M) have won by securing more than 50% of the votes polled. Mann himself secured 89% of the total votes



I.K. Gujral: A crucial role awaiting

polled in Tarn Taran. It means that not only over 90 percent of the Sikhs voted for the Mann group but a significant section of Hindus also voted for it. Thus the hurt Sikh mood and the oppression let loose by a corrupt administration has got a big drubbing along with opportunistic politicians.

Talks Favoured

The Akali Dal (M) president Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann has

made it amply clear that whatever they sought was within the purview of the Indian constitution. He has also declared that he and his party would follow the Gandhian path of non-violence and protect the integrity of the country. Most important MPs would take the oath of office without any preconditions, and that AISSF or any organization had no right to interfere and issue directives in matters related with the internal affairs and policy

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An Open Letter To S.S. Mann

My Dear Simranjit Singh Mann:
First of all, let me congratulate you for your

stand against the naked attack against the Golden Temple and your having been elected to the Parliament to serve

the cause of the nation and in particular the cause of the Khalsa Panth. The whole democratic world sighed in relief when they

heard of your release from the unjustifiable police detention for months, where you faced the police brutality at its worst. The whole world cried against the injustice done to you but every appeal fell on deaf ears.

Every Indian has full confidence in your ability and character to provide a national leadership and to bring back the Sikh community to the national mainstream and to eliminate private as well as state terrorism. The Sikh community in particular was anxiously waiting for your coming out of the jail to take the reins of the Sikh community, which had been in great turmoil and had lost its direction, as a result of which it not only suffered humiliation but also lost its strength. In light of this, I am writing this letter to offer my cooperation in your endeavour to bring back the lost glory of Sikhs in India. I use this opportunity to delineate a few suggestions which may prove of some value when you formulate your strategy and plans in the coming days.

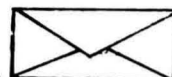
So far, our community has formulated two documents which draw the direction of the community

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Akali Dal leader Simranjit Singh Mann being received by his supporters on his arrival in Amritsar from Bhagalpur jail.

LETTERS



Bhopal Victims

The fifth anniversary of the Bhopal catastrophe will be mournfully observed on December 2-3. The full horror of the revictimisation of the Bhopal victims has been evident in the last few months, with the Madhya Pradesh Government, on sworn affidavits, proclaiming that the number of seriously injured is 4, 13 or 23! the State acting as parent of the victims has steadfastly refused to share with them or the public the full medical data on which these numbers may be 'based'. It has also been tardy in extending interim relief to less than a thousand victims so far.

The Supreme Court justified the settlement on the grounds that at least sixty thousand people were seriously injured. But apparently this is now forgotten. So has been the pressing urgency of relief for the victims which prefaced its settlement orders in February. All Bhopal petitions, raising serious issues of law and jurisdiction, have yet to be heard because, incredibly, the judgement on the validity of the Bhopal Act, reserved for months, has yet to emerge!

Eminent jurists and other citizens who stoutly defended the settlement on the ground of relief to victims should now at least recall them in their perorations on the Human Rights Day (Dec. 10)!

The valiant victims of Bhopal expect the new Government to undo, on a war footing, the five-year-old injustices. The Bhopal Act should be immediately amended providing for comprehensive interim relief, with victim and citizen participation. The State Government should be asked to respect the people's right to know and to release all claim and medical records. The Supreme Court

should be requested to deal with all the Bhopal petitions on a priority basis. The future hazardous presence of Carbide in India should be reviewed by a group of non-governmental citizens. The world's leading physicians should be invited to study long-term effects of MIC on the Bhopal victims. And Carbide must be asked to accept its liability in principle, and revise upward its contribution to half a billion dollars, with the two Governments contributing the rest to realise for the victims the amount of \$ 3 billion computed by the Union of India as necessary for relief and rehabilitation and victim compensation. Should Carbide appear intransigent, sovereign India's Parliament should not hesitate to consider a legislative rescission of the Bhopal award.

Many opposition leaders condemned the settlement. They have now the power and the duty as a high priority task to reverse the injustice to the Bhopal victims.

UPENDRA BAXI
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**Great Expectations
Belied**

What Indians expected of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi when he took over as Prime Minister five years ago has been shattered within a few months of his taking over the office. With little or no experience, either in politics or in administration, he started with a bang, his countrymen having reposed full faith in him for solving the perennial problems. His promise to take the country into the 21st century with a clean administration and a better image aroused great expectations.

All these hopes were shattered and Mr Gandhi found himself surrounded by a host of aides and advisers with poor knowledge of either administration or the masses. Their only job appeared to be to boost Mr Gandhi's image and rebut blindly all charges against the ruling party.

If Mr Gandhi had been properly advised, most of the reverses that the country suffered and brought him into disrepute could have been avoided. Much of the bad blood between the ruling party and the Opposition could also have been prevented.

Too frequent reshuffle of Union Ministers and shifting of Chief Ministers in the Congress(I)-ruled States made matters worse. Those moved from place to place behaved as migratory birds with no interest in their jobs. The bureaucrats too were found lacking in courage and integrity while advising their political bosses. All these made it impossible for Mr Gandhi to fulfil his promises.

BIBHUTI BHUSHAN BASU
New Delhi

The Fear of Minorities

It was because the Congress under Mahatma Gandhi mis-handled the communal card that a nationalist Muslim like Jinnah left the party and formed the Muslim League. His feelings were so hurt that subsequent appeasement of Muslims by the Congress could not bring him back.

There have been many riots to prove Jinnah's point that Hindus and Muslims cannot live together. But people continued to suffer even after Partition because we wanted to prove Jinnah wrong. To show that India is a secular State, we encouraged Muslims to stay on whereas the exodus of Hindus from Pakistan goes on. Muslims who came over to India waited for an opportune moment to start trouble.

Communal passions were under control for sometime after Partition and there was no rioting. This was when we could have asked the Muslims to join the mainstream by sacrificing some privileges under their personal law, such as three marriages and unrestricted number of children. This was not done, nor even attempted, obviously with an eye to Muslim votes. Gradually communal parties came into existence to protect Muslim interests. They enjoyed the tacit support of "secular" parties, and Hindus felt insecure at the sight of Muslims being allowed more and more benefits.

I agree with Mr Gupta that sectarianism is fuelled by many quarters. Incredibly, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata brought about a communal bias. Then came the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy, which is the exclusive creation of Hindu fanatics. Riots are no longer started by fanatics but by the police and para-military forces against whom no action is taken.

If Muslims have to live in constant fear and as second class citizens in India, it will definitely not glorify Hindus. They are our brothers and should stay with us with equal rights and responsibilities as Indians. This can be ensured by reviving the National Integration Council. Instead of protesting against what Mrs Benazir Bhutto or other heads of Government may say, we should punish the culprits.

A.K. GHOSAL
Hoshangabad

On Record

Please permit me to place on record that the VHP did not shift the foundation site at all from the spot earlier earmarked by it with a saffron flag. So the Central and State governments not only threw dust in people's eyes but committed a clear contempt of court. The foundation site forms part of plot No 586 which is marked as a historic graveyard 'Ganj-e-Shahidan' in the land

Sound And Fury

It does seem there is some kind of divine discontent among Indian voters.

—Dr Karan Singh.

People are the masters and the kings. The king can do no wrong.

—Dr M. Chenna Reddy.

India has grown up.

—The Economist

I will stay out of the Government.

—Mr V.P. Singh, on November 26.

God help any government which has men like V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar in it.

—Jay Dubashi in *Organiser*.

Clement Attlee was smaller than life.

—The Economist.

I carry both the Left and the Right with me. I play centreforward.

—Mr. Devi Lal.

I am not in the running (for the Prime Minister's post). They can ask my party.

—Mr. Jyoti Basu.

If they (the CPI(M) in West Bengal) haven't learnt a lesson they will realize soon that strong arm tactics tend to boomerang.

—Mr. Tapan Sikdar, BJP's State general secretary.

I shall continue to serve the people of India.

—Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

People are surprised because in our country no one resigns.

—Mrs Pupul Jayakar.

People will not accept a Prime Minister who is preceded by battalions and followed by Italians.

—Mr. Chaturanan Mishra, CPI member of the Rajya Sabha.

This country is not the personal jagir of the Muslims.

—Mr. Bal Thackeray.

There were two waves. A Hindu wave and an anti-Congress wave. While others in the Opposition benefited by one wave, we benefited by both.

—Mr Dharamchand Chordia, BJP's Maharashtra general secretary.

We will continue to call the BJP an aggressively communal party. They have now joined hands with the Shiv Sena which has said, "Let us destroy the green snakes".

—Mr. M. Farooqi, CPI secretary.

We did not know people have started leaving them.

—Mr Rajiv Gandhi on the BJP's accusation of engineering defections.

The Government at the Centre is so corrupt that even the water you get in your fields is supplied after the electricity has been taken out. When I acquire power at the Centre I will make sure you will get electrified water. And then you see, the crop yield will double.

—Mr. Devi Lal on the stump.

Corruption cannot be wished away.

—Mr Ramakrishna Hegde.

The Congress(!) is not just a law-breaker, but a home-breaker too.

—Mr Nar Bahadur Bhandari, whose wife defected to the Congress(!).

records, claimed as a Wakf property by the UP Sunni Wakf Board and is very much a part of the 'land in dispute'. You would be well advised to check your facts before handing over bouquets.

SYED SHAHABUDDIN
New Delhi.

Amethi Repoll

The Election Commission has not covered itself with glory in ordering repoll in only 97 of the 800-odd polling stations of the Amethi constituency from which Mr Rajiv Gandhi was contesting for Parliament. The situation called for a repoll in the whole constituency. From all accounts the conditions which prevailed there on the polling day vitiated the entire electoral process.

Even a single instance of proved corrupt practice with the consent of the candidate or his election agent is enough to annul his election. That all the abuses and mal-

practices in this election were at their instance is proved ex post facto by the revealing circumstance that neither of them has so much as hinted that all the malfeasance was against their instructions. Their silence is more eloquent than any spoken word. That at least the district police chief was hand-in-glove with Mr Satish Sharma who if not Mr Rajiv Gandhi's election agent was at any rate his alter ego, proves beyond doubt that the election in Amethi was one huge farce. In these circumstances, not to have ordered a total repoll is clearly a case pure pusillanimity.

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Readers are requested to send in their letters type-written or neatly hand-written to the Editor, Forum Gazette, 3 Masjid Road, Jangpura, Bhogal, New Delhi 110 014. Letters may be edited for clarity.

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- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality For Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

A New Beginning

With the swearing in of V.P. Singh as the Prime Minister, in a sense a new era has begun in Indian politics. In case this sounds somewhat extravagant, the circumstances in which he came to power need to be looked at somewhat closely.

Though, Indira Gandhi had returned to power with a strong mandate in 1980, it was more a reaction against the mismanagement of the Janata Party than an indication that her social or economic programme had been endorsed by the country. During the last four decades, our planning, such as it is, has not been able to deliver the goods. Poverty and disease continue to stalk the land. Some progress has been there no doubt but it is confined to certain sectors of the economy and has helped those who are already in positions of advantage. In consequence, the poor continue to be poor and inequities have not been taken care of in the manner they should have been.

It is not intended to deny or denigrate what has been achieved. The purpose is to draw attention to what remains to be done. Meanwhile, expectations have been aroused all around. People are impatient for a better deal, but the manner in which the strategy of development has worked favours only certain sections of the population and in particular excludes those who are at the bottom rung of the ladder.

Indira Gandhi was aware of these deeper forces at work. She knew that while she had been returned to power in 1980, it was not so certain that she would continue her sway. That is why she took the turn that she did. The situation in Punjab presented her with a ready-made jumping-off situation. This had become all the more urgent after she had lost power in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in late 1982. That is why she played the Punjab card in the manner that she did with consequences which do not have to be recounted.

The 1984 election was fought in circumstances which gave an entirely different thrust to Indian polity. One consequence was the massive victory of Rajiv Gandhi and the other was continued communalisation. The five years of Rajiv Gandhi's regime failed to take care of the basic problem of Indian poverty and some of the other social forces that had meanwhile got unleashed.

Without going into further details, two things may be stated. One, while V.P. Singh and the National Front over their victory to a combination of circumstances which they had the talent to exploit, the basic problems remain. Secondly, the basic problem is the problems of underdevelopment. When, after four decades of self-rule, a little less than half the population cannot have two square meals a day, there is something wrong somewhere. What exactly is wrong and how to take care of the problem is a matter that cannot be gone into here. The fact, however, remains that it is the most basic problem facing the country and no one can survive in office for long unless he attends to it.

Whether V.P. Singh survives in office or not would, however, depend in the short run not upon the social and economic policies that he chooses to follow but upon his management of the party and pressures exerted upon him by all kinds of mutually incompatible forces. Likely enough, the greater part of his attention would be taken up by immediate problems. However, it needs to be recognised that the problems of poverty and ignorance are the basic problems and the Indian politics can never be stable unless those are taken care of.

Lest most of it sound somewhat discouraging, it would be useful to call attention to at least one encouraging factor. Having gone through a grueling election campaign, no one has either the resources or the stamina to engage in another campaign so soon. This is V.P. Singh's trump card. For one thing, no one else can provide a rallying point as much as he can. For another, at least for sometime to come, no one would like to rock the boat beyond a point. Disagreements would be there and sometimes they would be noisy and unmanageable. But the breaking point would not come as long as these two favourable factors continue to operate in his favours.

It is for V.P. Singh now to take full, tactical advantage of these two assets. So far, the general impression is that he is somewhat indecisive. Would it not be more fair to say that, distracted by all kinds of contradictory and conflicting forces, he has had to steer his path to victory? Victory he has had now. What remains to be seen is to what use he put the power which is now in his hands.

Whatever he does or fails to do, let this not be said about him that he was a case of the under-use of him. Most politicians, Rajiv Gandhi for example, are accused of misuse of power. But under-use is as serious a matter as misuse of power. What we demand of him is full, proper and constructive use of power. That should be the meaning of his victory and of the National Front which he represents.

The People's Verdict

By A.S.Narang

The results of 1989 elections once again prove people's power, aspirations as well as developing alienation from the system. Various explanations including communal, caste factors, North-South divide, corruption, local issues, etc. are being provided for the type of results the polls have thrown. If the results of 1989 elections are analysed in the background of elections in India since 1952, it becomes clear that in India political mobilization is taking place, and particularly the village is being politically penetrated.

In spite of intense interplay of clashing interests based on primordial loyalties and feudal relations prevailing the content of social structure and large-scale poverty the voter in India is aware that he is involved in act of choice, and the implications of his act.

The Aspirations

In first three general elections, i.e. 1951-52, 1957 and 1962, in addition to various historical and environmental reasons which made the Congress dominate, one important factor for its success was the promise made to the peasants and workers, unemployed and underemployed, artisans and other sections of the middle class that independence from the foreign rule would end their misery and solve all their problems.

However, the strategy adopted by the Congress government for the amelioration of conditions of people become a source for the creation of State capitalism whose role, to a large extent, has been to build up cost free infrastructure for the industrialists. Consequently people started getting frustrated. This frustration in 1967 became a revolt against the Congress in the fourth general elections.

The United Fronts

But the various united fronts that formed governments in some of the States were at least as desperate in ideological complexion as the Congress itself if not more. So no significant measures were adopted by the non-Congress governments to resolve effectively the crucial problems of widening gulfs between the affluent and the poor and mass unemployment, especially in rural areas. Thus having raised the hopes among the masses, the new ruling elite also failed to show any awareness about the people's aspirations.

On the other hand after 1969 division of Congress, Mrs. Gandhi's several measures including nationalization of banks and insurance industry and abolition of privy purses, populist pronouncements, a good harvest and confusion

among the political opponents gave her just the opportunity she needed to rediscover the original momentum and mythology of the Congress. Consequently the results of 1971-72 elections turned out to be as unexpected as in 1967.

If people's aspirations are not taken care of, they become disenchanted and alienated from the system; political commitment to the system will erode, and hostility, anxiety and conflict will become chronic. The resolution of the political crisis requires a new make of society—a society based on full respect for human liberties on pluralism and on a better social deal for all.

Promises to keep

The people's response in 1971-72 was not a response based on unquestioning loyalty. It was a response, on the basis of a promise, a promise that the ruling party had itself laid down, based

on the slogan "Garibi Hatao". However, what emerged was a basic transformation in the power structure within the Congress which put an end to the nationwide organization of the party and paved the way for the ascendancy of the centralized opportunistic radicals given to the populist slogan mongering on the other. Within two years people got disenchanted and started working for the removal of government without waiting for elections. The ruling party reacted by proclaiming a state of Emergency in 1975.

The backdrop of 1977 elections was considered to be unusual. The political circumstances under which it was held, the issues it posed and the hopes and fears it gave rise to, vested it with a special significance. However, the elections were not only on the question of democracy versus emergency. In the background was people's hope for "bread with freedom".

The Janata Experiment

After coming to power the Janata Government not only failed to achieve the amelioration of the conditions of the people but also could not keep its organization intact. Consequently, soon the people started looking at it with a distrust, the culmination of which was sudden and complete rejection of it in the 1980 mid-term elections. As in 1971, so, too, now the hotch-potch of coalition and "Kitchen" government were held responsible for an anarchical situation, and need for a stable government impressed upon.

To be sure, the Congress (I) was returned in the 1980 elections on the slogan of "the government that works", i.e. government that provides stability, and a fair deal to all. Therefore, Mrs. Gandhi was confronted with the paradox of her situation as soon as she was back in power. She had to honour the mass mood and fulfil her promises of an effective government and social peace and process, but she could not keep or strengthen the infrastructure needed for a satisfactory implementation of her promises. As the early years of 1980 rolled by, the economic crises further deepened and political discontent started assuming alarming proportions.

New Trends

In 1983 the Congress(I) lost elections in the southern States of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Erosion in the party's base was evident from the results of various by-elections in other parts of the country, too. Thus, the situation did not auger well for the party as far as the next elections were concerned. Mrs. Gandhi started looking for new strategies to ensure

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Exit Autocracy, Enter Democracy

By Lt. Col. Manohar Singh (Retd.)

Rajiv Gandhi in his last TV show as the Prime Minister of India looked gentle with down in spirit, gracefully accepting the defeat of his party in the general elections. Some people are sorry for the downfall of the Congress(I). But they quickly reconciled with the wrong policies and strategies followed by his government. These could have remained camouflaged had the corruption in connection with the Bofors gun deal and such like defence items not been brought to light. The main contributors to the demolishing of Rajiv's autocracy were: V.P. Singh, Ram Jethmalani, Arun Shoury and N. Ram. Equally some newspapers have also had their role, prominent among them were the Indian Express, The Hindu and The Statesman. The Operation Blue Star, illegal detention of Jodhpur detainees, the protection of the guilty persons in the November, 1984 genocide of Sikhs and the unleashing of state terrorism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, corruption, communalization and

criminalization of politics, murder of independent Judiciary; all contributed to the rejection of the Congress(I) from power by the people.

No sensible person would get lost in jubilation on account of opponents' downfall, but would take lessons to avoid the same fate. Therefore, the National Front should see that it does not start on the wrong foot, which will not only pose threat to their full term, but dig their grave forever. This also applies to all the parties which are party to the current government, and they should sacrifice their ego, and party interests to give active and honest cooperation to the National Front.

One principal factor that should remain the guiding star of the new government is that it should not communalize and criminalize politics. What a common man wants is clean and effective government which can guarantee tensionless normal daily life. The attitude of the administration should not only be sympathetic towards the people but regard them masters of the government, and their self-respect

and voice are respected.

The new government should not only declare their faith in democracy and secularism but also display it in practice. The government should restore public faith in Judiciary and in the security forces. The police, too, should be given independent status so that they can stand up to the political interference to maintain its discipline and pride of the uniform in the eyes of public. The PAC and other forces should be reconstructed with adequate representations of minority communities, so that no partiality would be taken shape of. If only the new government respects the public sentiments and acts quickly to their demands the electorate would feel that they have a new government which is different from the one they had beared with for the last several years. Deflecting from this line would unconditionally put down the shutters on the government within no time. The exit of Rajiv and the enter of V.P. Singh should symbolize the coup de grace of autocracy and the dawn of democracy respectively.

An Open Letter To S.S. Mann

Continued from page 1

ity to ensure it self-respect, religious freedom, economic prosperity and protection to live in India in the Sikh way of life. First one was the agreement drawn in 1929, at Lahore, by Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh between the Sikhs and Indian National Congress headed by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru under the close watch of Mahatma Gandhi. Under this agreement, the Indian constitution had to have the consent of Sikh community, which meant that no law could be passed against the Sikh community affecting its Sikh way of life. The Sikhs did not sign the constitution, but in spite of that the constitution was made operative. In 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru betrayed the Sikhs when he failed to honour his commitment to the 1929 agreement with the Sikhs. When Masterji reminded him of the agreement, he replied that the circumstances had since changed. Of course, the second one is the much talked about Anandpur Sahib resolution which has been in the news for a few years. At this time, we cannot forget about a handful of people who tried their level best to misinterpret the document to portray it as a document against the sovereignty and integrity of India.

Since independence, the Sikh community has been treated with contempt and its prosperity in agri-

cultural field rescued the hungry Indians, but it was not appreciated or rewarded. And Punjab was not allowed and encouraged to develop its industrial base as it would raise its economic structure which would provide the Sikh community the stamina to stand up to the government and oppose the government's anti-Sikh policies. Under such volatile conditions the Sikh youth got more organized themselves under Sant. Bhinderanwale who drew the strategy for Khalistan, hoping it would meet their goal, to uphold the self respect, religious freedom and economic independence. This strategy seems to be out of frustration and quite spontaneous and from an ill calculated mind. It is unfortunate that the Congress(I) government instead of settling to a reconciliatory move, which would have satisfied the requirements of the Sikhs, went round not only India but the whole world as well to denigrate the Sikhs as communal and secessionistic. This strategy of the Congress(I) definitely made a deep dent in the minds of the public against the Sikhs and they reaped the fruit of winning the elections of 1984. Taking all the factors, mainly the interests of the nation as a whole and that of our community, the strategy of Khalistan is disastrous. But, I am told that the militants are determined to achieve their goal. We all have great hope on you that

you would convince this section of people reconcile to some other strategy which would ensure our self-respect, religious freedom and economic prosperity. There is no doubt in the mind of any person that whatever prestige the Sikhs are left with is absolutely due to the sacrifices of the Sikh community and its great role in the freedom struggle. It is the recognition of their role in India's past that a new initiative was started by the new government to settle the Punjab problem.

Character building and unity of Akali factions: The Sikh community was very proud of Shiromani Akali Dal before Operation Blue Star. But after that it has broken into various chips with the stroke of selfishness and greed. The selfishness is to obtain monetary gains through the chair of chief minister. This has become the motto of their lives and the duty to serve the cause of Khalsa Panth and of the nation has been totally buried by these self-seeking leaders. They have brought shame on themselves and tarnished the image of Sikh community in the eyes of the world. They are so shameless that even on the pointed appeal from meaningful Sikhs to unite themselves to solve the Sikh problem, they failed to get out of their degradation. In that they compounded the sufferings of the whole community. In the lights of this you have two tasks before

Hope For Peace In Punjab

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matters of the party. All this clearly shows that in spite of all bitterness Mr. Mann means business and is to do his best for the solution of Punjab problem. Of course, Mr. Mann demands that the Centre should hold talks with the "Panthic Committee", the Damdami Taksal and the AISSF. This may be considered as efforts for a Mizoram type solution. Mr. I.K. Gujral also approves of it. According to him, "The nation should welcome these people despite their extreme views". "Why can't the extremists in Punjab join the mainstream politics when the insurgents in Mizoram can do so?" Mr. Gujral opines.

Awareness

It is thus clear that people of Punjab have shown more awareness than the media or Delhi based intellectuals. They have worked to clear the cobwebs created by Political leaders and have taken the elections very seriously. May be there was some communal undercurrent at some places but it was not the dominating factor in the elections. Many Sikhs openly criticized the Akali leadership for having let down Punjab. They have sold off Punjab said many Sikh voters just as many Hindus said, Rajiv has sold off India. In this background the convincing defeat of the Congress and old Akalis in Punjab has raised new hopes.

Problems

These hopes, however, have another aspect, too. In jail and without active role Mr. Mann's position was of a different type. Having come out and assumed the

tremendous task of uniting various factions, he faces an uphill challenge. Not only there are several Akali factions but also there are divisions and sub-divisions in the militants also.

The AISSF is divided into at least three factions, the Damdami Taksal into three, there are three Panthic Committees, three Akali Dal factions, three sets of high priests, two SGPCs and a number of other outfits. To bring on amicable compromise among these factions is going to be a real challenge for Mr. Mann.

Centre's Dilemma

In the given situation Central government's role will also have to be cautious. Not only expectations from it are very high but the euphoria created by Akali Dal Mann's victory may make some militant outfits a bit unreasonable. Therefore, Centre has not only to enter into negotiations but also play a crucial role in balancing the forces and help atleast one leadership to consolidate its position. How far this role of Centre leadership will be viewed and projected by various factions will have to be watched. Established political parties including Akali Dal, communists and BJP may not like this for they fear their elimination from power game in this process.

Thus the trends in Punjab continue to be ominous. On the one hand there is genuine hope for peace and on the other likelihood of continuous confusion. It is in fact going to be a litmus test for both Mr. Simaranjit Singh Mann's and V.P. Singh's leadership. In this a very crucial role will have to be played by people like I.K. Gujral and Mr. Kirpal Singh M.P. from Amritsar.

you: One is to build up the character in Sikh masses to disown the lot which has betrayed the whole community, and second is to cater for the leadership which must be spotlessly cleaned and would run the state administration with the full cooperation of the Hindus and the Sikhs. The main task is to bring all Akali Dal factions together. Its duty would be to draw the main policies for the state.

I feel that you should head the Shiromani Akali Dal and should not go for the chiefministership as some circle suggests. Because as a president of a party one can feel the pulse of the people and understand the general situation well. As one is relieved of official duty, he will get more time to stay with the people. As the head of the Akali Dal, you can ensure the proper functioning of the government and that it does not go corrupt.

Since the institution of the Akal Takht, it has received determined opposition from the rulers of the country, because it provided central powerful leadership to enable the Sikh community to perform its

role delineated by its Gurus, which somehow remained suspected because it was the only section of the Indian community to have opposed foreign rule and casteism. So even after independence, the intention and efforts on the part of governments have been to nullify this institution and also the baptism, because these are the two basic sources for building Sikh character and its image. Regret to say that our own community has been damaging the status of Akal Takht Sahib by disowning its Jathedar Sahib. What I have in mind to suggest is that whatever the present system is, we have to appoint someone as Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib and we should honour him, and also find out another method of appointing the Jathedar Sahib if our own community does not favour the present system. But till we adopt the modified procedures, we should give unreserved respects to the present incumbent, so that the status of the Akal Takht Sahib

Continued on page 9

Bhopal Still A Ghost Town

What is the condition of Bhopal gas tragedy victims, nearly five years after this dreadful happening. On October 15, Bharat Dogra met several victim families in two colonies; one located just opposite the Union Carbide factory (J.P. Naar) and the other located at a distance of about six kilometers from the factory (Bohipura).

Report from J.P. Naar

Ayub Khan used to be a cart puller before the Bhopal gas tragedy. At that time he used to earn about Rs. 40 in a day. But after exposure to gas, he was not able any longer to pull a cart. He has now taken up the less-tiring work of preparing paper bags and selling these in the market. This too, he is able to do only with the help of children in his family. He is able to earn only Rs. 10 per day, on an average in this work, he says.

His brother Iqbal Khan continues to work as a tailor as before but his working capacity, and with this earnings have been reduced to a considerable extent.

To make up for the reduced earnings, the wife of Ayub Khan, Mumtaz, has taken up work for a sewing centre located just across the door. However, the hard fact is that Mumtaz is in no position to do even the normal household work, let alone the additional work. So all children cooperate and work hard for the survival of the family.

But even as they toil, they cannot forget a missing dear one. Yes, one child has died tragic victim of the gas disaster.

Today, there are eight members in this family, and they have to survive on lesser earnings than before in days of fast increasing prices.

All of them suffer from continuing side-effects of the gas tragedy. "Instead of our ailments decreasing with the passage of time, these have been increasing", said Mumtaz, who looked extremely weak and ill. She complains of pain in forehead, chest, hands and feet. If she puts in a little hard work, she gets breathless and has to take rest.

One child, Ashraf, complains of frequent fever and stomach ailments. His sister, pointing to the tap located very near their house, says that when she goes to fill up a bucket of water, she immediately gets breathless and is forced to take some rest.

For their child, who fell victim to the gas tragedy, this family was paid Rs. 10,000. On one occasion

they got Rs. 1500 and on another occasion Rs. 1000. For sometime they got some grain free of cost. This is all the compensation/

depressing and hopeless condition; the gas continues to take its toll in the form of continuing ailments.



relief they have got so far; even though their earnings have been greatly reduced and they have to spend excessively on medicare.

Abdul Latif has a family of nine members, he himself, his wife, his mother and six kids. Before the gas tragedy, he was employed in a motor parts shop. After the gas tragedy, he was not able to cope with the work to the same extent as before, no matter how hard he tried, and so he was dismissed by his angry employer. Then he took to working as a "Kabari" (rag-seller). Earlier, he was working on a salary of Rs. 1000 per month. Now, he is able to earn only Rs. 10 per day on an average. His wife, Hamida, has several health problems after the gas disaster; but she has to take up sewing work to earn about Rs. 300 per month for the survival of the family.

One daughter who was exposed to the gas and later married in a Village Kalwana, about 80 kms from here, has been backed by her in-laws, who feel that the treatment of her many ailments is possible only in Bhopal.

Another daughter, Roshanara, who was exposed to the gas gave birth to a child whose body turned blue and had boils at many places. Soon the child died.

All family members continue to suffer from numerous ailments such as breathlessness, pain in eyes, head and chest. His mother has coughed blood several times.

Muhammad Shafiq lost five members of his family in the gas disaster. He lost his wife and three children. Two surviving children continue to suffer from many ailments. His mother coughs blood.

Shafiq was employed in iron work; but as he cannot do it now, he works as a "Kabari". Apart from the lump sum compensation for the dead members of his family, he gets Rs. 700 per month for the death of an adult member.

He has married a second time, but the entire family lives in a very

He used to work as an electrician and earn Rs. 1400 per month before the gas tragedy. Now he is able to earn only Rs. 600 due to his reduced work.

A part of the compensation money was taken away by his brothers while another big chunk had to be frittered on repeated, frequent medical expenses.

Bashir Ali, earlier, worked as a cart-puller. But he was unable to continue this work after exposure to gas, and so he now works as a "Kabari" earning much less than before.

All five members of his family continue to face several adverse effects of gas exposure, such as breathlessness and haziness in eyes,

an accident and now, cannot even go to hospital for treatment.

His wife, Ratan Bai, also suffered similar damage to lungs in the gas disaster. She had collapsed on the night of the disaster and became unconscious. Recently, again she fell unconscious for sometime.

Their elder son, Ramesh, suffers from swelling in stomach area.

Ramesh's sons Bhanu, Pratap and Gunjan are frequently ill. They have to be taken to doctors again and again.

Ramesh's sister, Rajni, suffers from swelling. She also had a spontaneous abortion. Her husband, R.K. Yadav, suffers from chest pain.

R.K. Yadav lost his regular job after the gas disaster.

This middle class family is struggling hard against the disaster. A brave effort is being made to save each other. But most earnings have to be spent on medical expenses. They have become heavily indebted. It is even becoming difficult to pay the house rent. But they have not lost their smile.

They are eager to offer tea to a visitor. The only cash relief that has reached this family is a payment of Rs. 1500/-

Ratan, another woman of this colony, said that after the gas disaster her sister gave birth to a child who developed very abnormal symptoms. After sometime both of them died. She herself suffers from cough and swelling in throat.

Kailash Bottam, a government employee, has been spending a lot of money for the treatment of his eyes after the gas disaster and he has just been told that he also has a heart ailment. In the prime of his youth, he does not know where to find the money for this treatment.

Gajadhar, an elderly person, worked in a textile mill at the time of the gas tragedy. After the gas exposure, he lost his ability to work here and so had to leave his job. Today, he is living completely alone. He frequently has pain in stomach and also in joints.

Phool Chand, a barber, experiences frequent uneasiness and his eyesight has been adversely affected. His work capacity and skill have been greatly reduced. His wife, Lajjo Bai, and daughter Lakshmi Bajare frequently ill. Lajjo Bai used to earn some money in massage work, but she is unable to continue this work due to weakness and ailments. Phool Chand's mother died after the gas disaster.

Kundan Lal, an elderly person, used to take up welding contracts. But after the gas exposure, he says, he cannot even walk properly not to speak of continuing welding work. So he has been forced to give up his work. His children have started a school in their house to make both ends meet.

Shyama Bai, a widow, suffers from acute body pain. "Each bone in my body aches and I find it difficult to walk even a few steps", she said.

Report From Bohipurva

Abdul Gani drives an autorickshaw. His son also drives

Mr. R.K. Yadav lost his regular job after the gas disaster. This middle class family is struggling hard against the disaster. A brave effort is being made to save each other. But most earnings have to be spent on medical expenses. They have become heavily indebted. It is even becoming difficult to pay the house rent.

Chandu Khan has a family of six members. Earlier, he was employed in a furniture workshop. Now, he has to work as a "Kabari". His earnings are much lower now. His wife, Shakila, spits blood with cough. Her eyes are hazy. She gets breathless very soon. She has to be frequently hospitalised. Expenses of private medication are also too much.

Chandu Khan has another wife who is somewhat better and works hard at the sewing centre.

This family has received relief of Rs. 1500 only, apart from having access to a part of foodgrain needs for some months.

Abjal Khan, a painter, continues his profession after the gas disaster but his earnings are lesser, now, due to the reduced capacity to work. His wife, Feroza, complains of body pains and uneasiness leading to vomiting.

Two of their children expired after remaining ill for sometime after the gas exposure. No compensation was given as, probably, the link of these deaths to the gas leaks could not be proven in the eyes of doctors and officials, although, it is very clear to the people living here.

A surviving child, Ashiya, emerges shyly out of a hidden corner to complain of frequent stomach pains and breathlessness.

Munna Khan lost as many as six members of his family, his parents, his wife Bibijaan, and three children, in the gas tragedy.

an autorickshaw. Their eyes ache and they suffer from other ailments after the exposure to gas disaster. But nevertheless, they drive the autos because their family of eight has to survive. Before the gas tragedy, Abdul Gani had a job in Water Works; but as he could not report to work for some days and thus he was removed from work.

With tears swelling up in her eyes, his wife tells that they had five buffaloes. When they fled in panic on the night of the disaster, they could not look after the buffaloes. They had to spend some days in Hoshangabad. Two buffaloes were lost while one died. The remaining two were sold to pay off the accumulating debts.

All of them continue to suffer from ailments long after the gas disaster; breathlessness and various problems. Recently, the youngest daughter, due to weakness and giddiness, fell down suddenly and injured her finger. Her brother, Raja, who was earlier known for his good health has now become very weak due to frequent bleeding from nose.

This is one family which has not received any relief at all from the government.

Idd came and went this year, they said, and they could not afford to buy any sweets or clothes.

Rajaram, an elderly person, suffered acute damage to lungs. He was given an instrument for breathing exercises. Recently, he met

By Bharat Dogra

Balbir Singh is a 15-year-old youth living in Tilak Vihar colony of Delhi. He is soft-spoken

and very eager to be helpful to others. In the anti-Sikh violence in November, 1984, three elder brothers of Balbir Singh were killed.

Balbir Singh is the youngest son of Sardar Milap Singh and Bibi Soni Kaur. He is now also their only surviving son. Five years ago they had three sons, all of them youths in the prime of their life. Puran Singh was an autorickshaw driver, Hoshiar Singh did art-work on clothes, Sevak Singh was employed in the Air Force.

Then in November, 1984 all happiness was suddenly snatched from this well-settled family, then living in Block No. 32 of Trilokpuri colony of Delhi. Three elder sons were killed; other family members were scattered. They could meet each other only after some days in relief camps.

Finally, the family shifted to one room flats allotted to widows and some days in relief camps.

Today, the three widows have been allotted flats. They have obtained work as peons. They have to leave home in the morning and return in the evening. Their children remain neglected and exposed to bad influences. After they got employment, which fetches them a salary of around Rs. 1000/- per month, their pension of Rs. 400/- per month was stopped. If they get adequate pension the dependence on morning-

to-evening job will be removed, and they will be able to look after their children properly. These children have seen their near and dear ones being killed before their eyes; they have grown up in an atmosphere of fear and bitterness—they need all the motherly care they can get.

Balbir Singh's parents get a pension of Rs.500/- per month. On this meagre income the four-member family has to subsist—Balbir Singh, his parents and his younger sister. "When my married daughters visit us I feel so sad that I cannot provide even the minimum of hospitality", said Bibi Soni Kaur. Yet she insisted that at least

I should not go away without a cup of tea. She brought the photographs of her sons to show these to me." Look here, look how handsome youths they were", she said again and again.

Keemat Kaur is a neighbour of Soni Kaur. Her elder son was killed in the November, 1984 carnage in Trilokpuri, Delhi. After this, her family remained in a camp for sometime before shifting into a plot allotted in Tilak Vihar. After the loss of his son, her husband has suffered such a mental setback that he is unable to concentrate on any work. He cannot even stay at home and goes away, time and again, due to the unsettled state of his mind. Thus the entire burden of bringing up three small sons and one daughter has fallen on her. And to shoulder this responsibility, the only support she has is a monthly pension of Rs.400/-.

Bibi Keemat Kaur insisted that I should visit her home to see the photograph of her son who was killed in the organised carnage five years back. The carefully pre-

served photograph showed a young, handsome man who must have been at the centre of all hopes of this family. But now, only his memories were there. His four surviving brothers and sisters, sitting huddled together on a small cot, will continue to ask for a long time this remorseless society, why their brothers were killed

Jamuni Kaur sits sadly in a small Khoka (wooden stall) located in a corner of Tilak Vihar hut colony (or camp) where families displaced by November, 1984 violence, who have not yet been allotted a flat live. Five years back, in the carnage directed at innocent Sikhs, her four sons were killed. The family's shop was looted. Everything was lost, and yet she cannot sit quietly because her duty of arranging the marriage of her daughters continues to beckon her. So she continues to work hard. In the hut shop, she fondly shows me the framed pictures of her sons. Her daughters-in-law live in flats located nearby. "But they cannot support us as they have their own children to provide for. I've to sit in this shop as we've no other means of support", she said.

Bhaagu Singh was an 18-year youth living in Tilak Vihar. In November 1984 his elder brother, an autorickshaw driver, and his father, who used to weave cots, were killed. Then suddenly, there was no earning member left in the

family. For nearly four years the situation remained like this. The family had to subsist on the pension of Rs. 400/- given to a widow. Only recently, Bhaggu Singh's mother could get a job in packing department of a factory. His sister-in-law could also get a job as a peon. But now a new problem has cropped up for her. She has to go to Kalkaji, located at the other end of the sprawling metropolis, and meanwhile, her children are neglected.

The trauma caused by the violence and subsequent problems have continued to take their toll. Bhaagu Singh's younger brother has become mentally imbalanced.

Sadora Singh is an elderly person. In the November 1984 carnage he lost four sons, two sons-in-law, and one grand-son. Thus he lost seven family members in one day, all of them fell victim to gangs of killers. What has happened to the various widows in his family is a long story, but in addition, there is the tragic plight of Sadora Singh and his wife in their old age.

Apart from having to bear the unbearable grief of so many deaths of youths in their family, they still have to look after some children and grand children while their own health is fast failing them; they themselves need to be looked after, and their financial position is precarious.

The hut in which Gyani Pratap Singh lived in Sultanpuri was looted in November 1984, and in addition the gurudwara in Paharganj, where he was employed, was also attacked. Thus he lost all his belongings as well as his employment. He came to live in the hut-

colony in Tilak Vihar where nearly 1300 families who were victims of this violence are clustered together. From time to time, often as a sequel to violence in Punjab, tension has erupted in Delhi also, and the Tilak Nagar-Tilak Vihar belt is, generally, a flash-point of such tension. It was on one such occasion that Gyani Pratap Singh's eldest son, Hargun Singh was killed in police firing. Thus once again his family's livelihood was destroyed. He was employed in a bank. None else in this 8-member family has a regular job. As their request for a flat has not been accepted despite several promises, the family of Gyani Pratap Singh as well as some other families have recently occupied some vacant DDA flats on their own, and this may be a future source of tension.

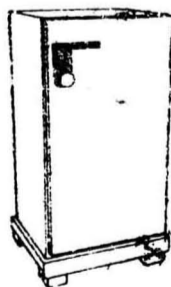
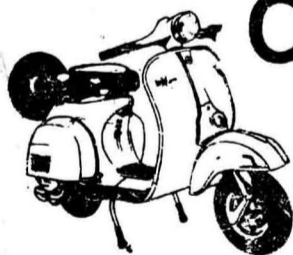
Ajit Singh and Kulwant Singh, both of whom were earlier working as carpenters/petty contractors in Trilokpuri, were earlier doing business due to the proximity of their residence to the upcoming township of NOIDA. They were uprooted from their earlier residence; place of work and contacts by the November 1984 violence. After spending several months in camps, they had to come to Tilak Vihar which is at the other end of town and where they do not have the necessary contacts. Their business has suffered very badly, they say.

Sardar Atma Singh, a respected leader of the November 1984 violence-affected people, who have settled in Tilak Vihar informed that on the whole, nearly 2200 such families are living in Tilak Vihar at present. Nearly 900 of them have been

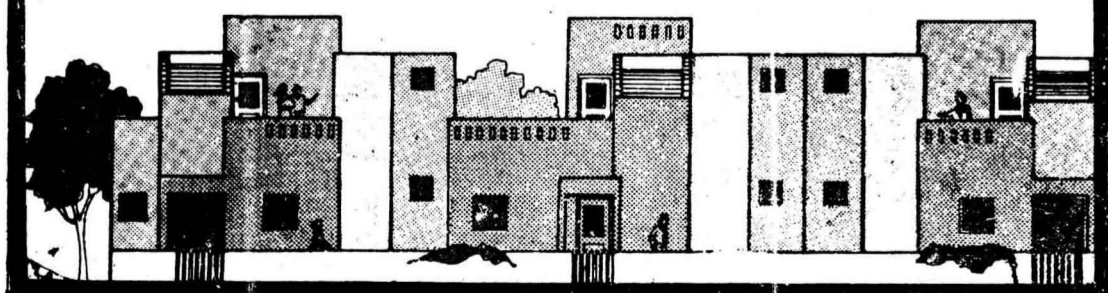
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The People'

1984 Elections

Continued from page 3

her continuance in power. For this she chose a new slogan "desh bachao" which was meant to arouse the communal feelings in the name of nationalism. So she deliberately allowed the Punjab situation to deteriorate, till June 1984, that is few months before the due elections, and proceeded to launch an attack, the 'Operation Bluestar', in the Golden Temple. She was hailed as a saviour and the Congress(I) made a huge political capital out of it. However, soon the situation started changing and by September-October 1984, people once again started questioning their economic situation. But it changed dramatically after the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi on 31 October 1984.

On the eve of December 1984 General Elections there was a strong "sympathy wave" in favour of the Congress(I). But there was also the factor of people's yearning for change normally a change means a vote for the opposition, but in the 1984 elections, the most credible agent for change seemed to be Rajiv Gandhi. The opposition stalwarts such as Charan Singh, Jagjivan Ram, Chandra Shekhar and Vajpayee had already been given a chance and had been found wanting. The youthful, sober and clean-imaged Rajiv Gandhi, who promised to provide goal-oriented, performance-related, honest and efficient administration caught the imagination of the masses. Thus in these elections the negative

e Against Sikhs

om Justice

otted plots, while nearly 1300 of em are living in huts. Flats are le-room structures, or Janata flats s these are popularly called in elhi. The living conditions in its-colony are very bad. A arby drain emits foul smell. veral children have died in an idemic caused by squalid con- tions, a resident said.

According to Sardar Atma ngh, out of nearly 949 women dowed by the November '84 vio- nce, as per the official records, e majority have settled in Tilak ar while the remaining families ve been resettled in Sangam rk, Raja Garden and Raghubir gar. These Widows are entitled a pension of Rs. 400 per month. s extremely difficult, may be impos- le, for a family to make both ds meet in Rs. 400/-. The pen- n should have been fixed much her, at least about Rs. 1000 or

As things are, most of the ws have to look for a job in er to sustain themselves. To he extent, the administation ps them to get jobs as peon, on alary of around Rs. 1100. But e they get these jobs, the pen- n stops. Frequently, they have ver long distances to reach r workplaces; so their children ain neglected, and are exposed ad influence with none to look r them. A large number of chil- n are unable to go to schools ch conditions. An organisation, All India Sikh Conference, is trying to provide special edu- onal facilities for them. he residents complain that are harassed, time and again, he police.

the violence of the first week November 1984, over 3000 s w killed in Delhi while

nearly 50000 were displaced from their homes and had to seek shelter in relief camps, etc. The government's scheme of rehabilitation of victims of violence has included giving a compensation of Rs. 20000 for each killed person. In the case of the deaths which have been established legally, this compensation has been given; but social workers working among violence victims say that several people were killed on roads, and so several deaths could not be properly established and the compensation has not been given in such cases.

Some of the violence victims, specially the widows, on a preference basis, have been allotted one-room flats. However, there have been complaints that the victims were sent notices to make lump sum payments; while firstly, they were not in position to make these payments; and secondly, they should never have asked for such payments, as they had been displaced from their homes by violence against which the government miserably failed to provide any protection.

Modest compensation payments for damaged houses, and loans for damage suffered in business etc. have been given. Pensions have been given (at the rate of Rs. 400 per month) to widows and to a few other persons needing support, and some efforts have been made by the government to find jobs for them (but those who get jobs, mostly as peons, no longer qualify for pension).

On the whole, the government's effort at rehabilitation of the victims of November 1984 violence against Sikhs, has been inade-

quate, patchy, devoid of human feelings and insensitive to the special needs of the people who have seen the worst violence of post-independent India. Giving a widow Rs. 400 a month, and considering the government's responsibility towards her to be over, can only be called narrow-minded thinking of an extreme kind.

However, social workers like Gurucharan Singh Babbar, leading activist of All India Sikh Conference, have played an important role in fulfilling the need of approaching the victims in a humane and sensitive manner or way "It has been our endeavour to keep in constant touch with the violence victims, take up their problems with the government and share these with other concerned persons and create a feeling that they are not alone in their sufferings and problems," he says. For his dedicated work among the victims, and for protesting against the

delay in punishing the culprits of November 1984 violence, Gurucharan Singh Babbar has been harassed by the police and threatened by other powerful persons involved in the violence.

Babbar, who has been in touch with the victims of November '84 violence in other parts of the country as well, says that the record of rehabilitation in other cities has been much worse compared to Delhi.

In Delhi, at least something has been done. In other parts of the country, this work has been almost completely neglected. The worst affected cities (except Delhi) were Kanpur, Bokaro and Patna. In Patna Mr. Darshan Singh, who was trying to get justice to violence victims was recently killed, he said.

Apart from rehabilitation, the other most important aspect of the violence of November 1984 relates to the punishment of the guilty persons. Here our memory goes back to the days following this violence when the then Police Commissioner, S. S. Jog, had said that special Courts will have to be appointed for trials of those responsible for the violence. Mr. Jog said that he would approach the government for the appointment of special courts after

the inquiries in this connection were completed by Jan. (1985)

Today, when we look at these and other such promises, these appear ludicrous in the light of the actual experience for the bitter reality is that nothing significant has been done to punish the culprits of November 1984 violence. The inability of the system to punish the culprits of the worst carnage in the history of the post-independent India is the biggest blow to the faith of people in the ability of the existing system to provide at least the minimum of justice. This poor record of justice is also the biggest weapon in the hands of terrorists as they can now go around loudly preaching that the people of their community cannot get justice in India. All democratic minded people in India forgetting other differences should demand proper and humane rehabilitation of the victims, and speedy and adequate punishment of the culprits of November 1984 violence against Sikhs. It is a good sign that several socially concerned persons, who happened to belong to the majority community (Hindus) have been active, from the beginning, in organising relief camps, preparing reports on violence and demanding action against guilty persons.

s Verdict

turned not against the gov- ent but against the opposi-

People's Power

above analysis suggests at elections in India have from ginning been a very effec- strument in the hands of the e who found it to be useful w out not merely the exist- ling group and the ruling but even a whole set of polit- rangements which did not m to the system that they ginally accepted. The polit- e, however, does not seem e understood this. That is ey continue to treat people ds. Rajiv Gandhi govern- so behaved the same way. of fulfillment of their expect- what people got was crim-

inalization, communalization and corruption in politics and social life. Disillusionment with the Congress (I)'s performance started moving people towards a negative vote. Emergence of V.P. Singh as an alternative leader provided people with new hope also. People evaluated the state governments also on the basis of performance be it of N.T. Rama Rao or Devi Lal.

If even now people's aspirations are not taken note of and they will become disenchanted and alienated from the system; political commitment to the system will erode, and hostility, anxiety and conflict will become chronic.

The resolution of the political crisis requires a new make of society—a society based on full respect for human liberties—on pluralism and on a better social deal for all.

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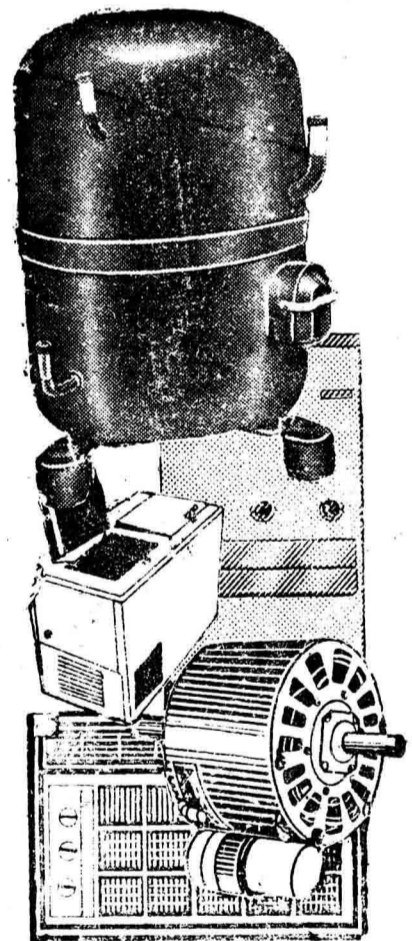
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Thoughts On Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom Day

How Death Is Conquered?

Sikh & Fear do not go together. Fear of Death in the case of a Sikh is a contradiction in terms. Doesn't our Guru, the perpetual Guru Granth Sahib teach us in the words of Kabir?

"Ab Kaise Maroun Maran Man Mania
Mar Mar Jaate Jin Raam Na Jania"

Exactly, even today, persons in the garb of Sikh apparel and appearance drenched in their lowly pursuits of material illusion cannot realize the magnificent contribution that our Gurus and the Sikhs of yore have made towards the conquest of Death. Indeed, the months of November, December and January come to reiterate to me that the Grandfather, the Son and the Grandsons: practically laid bare to the Sikhs the powerless poison of Death, the ineffective dose of Fear of Death, the inability of the Sword to kill the Saviours of Mankind and the deathlessness of those who are willing to face death squarely.

Sometimes, I wonder at the helplessness of those who look up to the worldly treasures or who bank upon their worldly relations or who boast about the comforts that they can provide themselves. Do they know that Guru Gobind Singh himself proclaimed a message to the Lord that without him, he was not interested in comforts, without him, even the quilts were a disease and without him, he could never be frightened, could never he say so? In the Machhiwara, where, in the case of worldly people and in terms of worldly existence, he was in terrible straits. Followed by the enemy, bereft of his companions and his sons, physically tired in extreme and death knocking at his door, the Guru defied adversity, defied the fear of death, defied death itself. But, have we pondered over the question: How did he do so? How can one do so? The answers are all there in the words and

deeds of our masters and the implementation of their commands by indomitable Sikhs like Bhai Dayal, Bhai Masti Dass, Bhai Sati Dass and countless others. Surely, we cannot lose the mettle of our forefathers so soon. Sikhism was born with the birth of Guru Nanak (1469) and has passed through various vicissitudes always free, always at the top, always fearless, always defiant against tyranny, fear and death and yet we seem to give way under the weight of ruthless, unprincipled rulers who have one aim and who are aided by unscrupulous Sikhs who neither know Sikhism nor live Sikhism nor indeed have respectful devotion to its authority. Out of ten Gurus, two offered themselves to Death only to conquer it, the last Guru-in-person, Guru Gobind Singh actually asked for and received the consent for death of his disciples on Baisakhi Day in 1699 only to enable them to conquer death. And here is the scenario complete in its grandeur, full in its mystique and incomparable to any other deliberate method of killing for all times to come.

Sometimes, when I think of Bhai Mani Singh or Bhai Taru Singh or for any Guru of Sikh, I marvel at their strength of character and their clinging to the life of endless struggle merely for the love of Guru, because that love enabled them to be free, to be able to live in Anakh and to render to the society at large, their best in life and death. I marvel at the courage and steadfastness and Adolta of Bhai Mati Dass when fixed under the saw, he wishes his face to remain attached to Guru's feet. Some years ago, I was fascinated by the heart-felt devotion screaming in these lines by some unknown Sikhs.

Chamkaur Ke Maidan Se Sandesh Hai Aya
Sarhand Ki Diwaron Ne Hai Mujh Ko Bulaya
Mati Dass Ke Aare Ne Mujh Ko Lalkara
Bhai Dayale Ki Degh Ne Mujko

By Bhagwant Singh Dalawari

Hai Pukara
Satidass Ki Razai Mujhko Sabak Sikhae
Sis Jae Tau Baishak Jaye Par Sidak Na Jake
Kab Hogi Poori Aarzo Mujhko Batilayo
Kab Ubala Jayoonga Mujhko Samjhao
Mere Tan Ko Aaron Ka Kab Pyar Millega
Charakharion Pe Charh Jaane Ka Kab Avsar Milega
Jisko Tou Ne Najam Dia Voh Mit Na Sakega
Jisko Tou Ne Pyar Kia Voh Jhuk Na Sakega

Then I happened to meet the writer of this piece. The Satsang with him was a great enriching experience. He literally meant what he wrote. Discussing the conquest of death that our Gurus themselves achieved and then bequeathed the legacy to us, the writer told me that a Sikh could never be frightened, could never frighten anyone. So long as the blood of Guru Tegh Bahadur, his illustrious son, Guru Gobind Singh and his four sons, the Sahibzadas, runs in the veins of a Sikh, he would fight tyranny with righteousness, he would selflessly serve other without rewards want recognition, he would practice the universality of Guru Granth Sahib in theory and in everyday life. Indeed he would live as if he were dead and he would die as if he was ever going to live. There is no doubt that our martyrs are more alive today than they ever were, when they breathed. It is because of their life and their martyrdom that we can breathe freely.

After all what makes a man afraid of death? His attachments? His fear of the unknown? His unexpected adversity? His unexpected death or death of his family members? Now, all these and indeed all his parameters of Fear have been taken care of by our Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib

today majestically directs the life of the Sikh. If the Sikh is in reality prepared to live the dictates the emanate from Guru Granth Sahib from the mouths of Kabir, Farid, Ravidas, Naamdev besides our gurus-where indeed, is the basis of Fear, any kind of fear including the fear of death. Let us look at the messages:

Pankaj Moh Pag Nahin Chale Ham Dekhan Teh Doobale (in the quagmire of attachment, one's feet cannot move; I have witnessed their agrowing).
Where is the fear of attachment?

Kiv Sachira Hovie Kiv Kiv Koore Tute Paal
Hukam Rajai Chalna Nanak Likhya Naal
(How can we be living in trust and how can we break the wall of falsehood? Says Nanak: we should abide by the Lord's will in all circumstances).

Where then is the fear of the Unknown?
Jau Raaj Den Tan Kaun Vadijai, Bhik Mangaen Tau Kya Ghat Jai (If you give me the kingdom, what glory does accrue to me? If you make me beg, what do I lose?)

Where is the fear of adversity, then?

Eh Man Pyari Toun Sada Sach Samale
Eh Kutambh Toun Jau Dekhda Chale Nahin Tere Naale
(Oh my beloved mind, keep safely the Lord's Name, i.e. Truth. The family that you see around will not go with you.)

How can one be worried about the death of oneself or one's dear ones?

And the message is clear: Sura Sau Pehchaniye Jau Larre Din Ke Het

Purza Purza Kat Mare Kabhu Na Chhade Khet
(The brave is the one who fights for the downtrodden; he is cut into pieces but he never runs away from the battlefield of righteousness).

And, indeed, Kabir's masterpiece from Guru Granth Sahib: Jis Marne Te Jag Dare, Ere Man Anand

Marne Hee Te Payeeye Pooran Parmanand.

(The death which frightens the whole world produces ecstasy in me, because only with death does one attain the Lord who is perfect Happiness).

Let me conclude this piece with a tribute to Guru Tegh Bahadur in the poem of a devoted disciple: (in Hindi)

Mere Sache Patshan Gur Tegh-bahadur, Barson Se Sara Desh Kahe Tu Hind Ki Chadar.

Zulam Ne Jab Dunia Ko Tha Bahut Sataya, Khalke Khuda Ke Pre Ne Tera Dil Piglaya.

Guru Nanak Ka Khboon Tab Tere Jigar Mein Khola,

Insaniyat Ka Payar Tere Hirde Mein Bola.

Tune Apna Sis Diya Tha Dharam Ki Khatir,
Sabko Hak Hai Us Pooja Ka Jiska Voh Patar.

Kashmir Ke Aye The Jab Voh Dukhi Brahmin,
Khauf Se Paka=Rtha Aake Tere Daman.

Aap Ke Jab Aras Ne Tha Diya Dilasa,

Un Paniditon Ki Musibton Ka Suna Khulsa.

Chain Se Rehne Na De Yeh Auranazeb.

Zulum Se Musalman Banaye Aur Kare Phareb.

Mautka Dar Deke Ham Kokara Pareshan,

Aap Garibnawaj Ho Ab Bachao Jann.

Ghambeerta Se Dekh Raha Tha Gobind Pyara

Apne Pita Se Poochchta Tha Haal Sara.

Satgur Bole Premse Sun Ai M Laal

Aurangzeb Ne Zulum Ka Hai Bichchaya Jaal.

Desh Ko Darkar Hai Ik Aisa Mahatma

Deke Apni Jaan Bacha Le Desh Ki Aatma

Apne Pita Ko Bola Phir Yeh Gobind Balak

Aapse Barh Kar Koi Nahin Ab Dharam Ka Palak

Muskarate Tegh Bahadur Aur Josh Mein Aaye

Kehdo Aurangzeb Se Tumko Na Sataye.

Ham Baanege Musalman Gar Guru Ko Banao

Guru Hamara Rehbar Hai Pehle Usko Manao

Jis Maut Se Sara Jag Sada Raha Ghabraya

Us Maut Ko Dawat Dekar TuNe-Bulaya

Kat Diya Sar Maut Ka Aur Jeena Sikhaya

Apne Sikhon Mein Maut Ka Dar Mar Chukaya.

Ek Bhikhari Aaya Hai Ab Jholi Phailaye

Bhar Do Jholi Shahidi Se Voh Khaali Na Jaye.

The Sikh's life has to be the manifestation of Guru Nanak's commands: JAU TAU PREMKHELAN KA CHAO, SIR DHAR TAI GALI MERI AAO (If you wish to play the game of love, come with your head on the palm.). That's why Bhakt Ravidas makes it clear:

"Kaha Bhayo Jau Tan Bhayo Chhin Chhin

Pre Jaye Tau Dapro Tero Jan"

(What does it matter if my body is cut to pieces; all I am afraid is that I do not lose the love of my Lord.)

This is the personification of a Sikh. Then where is the FEAR of death. Death comes as a bride to the Sikh who lives and dies for righteousness.

Discover the love of young generation



FOR LIGHT AND SOFT HAIR-FIXING



"A Lamp Was Lit In My Heart"

By Bhagwant Singh Dalawari

What an irony! The Guru says: PIO DADE KA KHOL DITHA KHAJANA, TAN MERE MANN BHIA NIDHANA. KHAWEN KHARCHEN RAL MIL BHAJ TOT NA AWE VADHDO JAI. (I delved into the treasures left by my forefathers and my heart and mind were full of wealthy material. The brothers mixed together and ate out of that treasure; there was no dwindling of wealth; IN FACT THE WEALTH WENT ON INCREASING.) The Sikh quarrels incessantly with himself, ignoring Guru's commands; The Sikh quarrels with his parents, with his wife, with his neighbours, with his environments and remains UTTERLY in want of *trishna* (wanting material wealth). The Sikh leadership is sold out to the money-oriented aggrandisement and does not hesitate to abuse, hate, even kill the opposing leadership. What kind of leadership and what kind of Sikh we present today. And another tragedy of the worst order is that we have made SHABAD GURU, about whom we boast so much in pointing out the follies of Nirankaris, Radhaswamis and others depicting them as victims of personality-Guru, as PAWN in the mischievous game of one-manship:

When I began writing out the outpourings of my wounded heart with a grateful heart, I had something else in mind like our Guru's unambiguous universality and catholicity in declaring THAT THE MESSAGE THE GURU GIVES IS FOR ALL THE FOUR VARNAS OF the Hindus. But I am struck by an American *Sant-Mat* (led by Sant Ajaib Singh—a variation of Radhaswamis), Carol Garzona, now 39, whose interest in Guru Granth Sahib, whose respect for the Shabad Gur and whose in-depth effort to live the commands in our Holy Scripture are matched in truth and in practice by her devotion to her Guru, i.e. Sant Ajaib Singh.

We are responsible for not only disowning the commands of our Masters in our daily lives but ALSO FOR DOING EVERYTHING IN NOT READING SO UNIVERSAL A MESSAGE. How could we do so? We are involved in internecine quarrels and we are saddled with an S.G.P.C.—Akali combine who have nothing to show in terms of religious and spiritual advancement of the flock but the entire record for the last few

decades is of personal itch for power, spread of falsehood and for undermining the sanctity of the holiest places of our heritage AFTER THE GLORIOUS PERIOD OF SACRIFICES FOR THE LIBERATION OF GURDWARAS. Incidentally Sant Attar Singhji had already predicted that although the Gurdwaras were liberated for selfless service but they were not

serving the purpose at all.

In 1982, I visit America, Seattle to be more precise, to see my daughter, come across Ms Carol Garzona, a housewife, deeply entrenched in spirituality. She is introduced by my Sikh friend, whom I meet accidentally in the MONTHLY MELA-type satsang the Sikhs organize in material splendour to quarrel about contributions and CHAUDHARSHIP. And the Sikh friend I happened to meet after 32 years is an old class-fellow of mine in Giani in Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, New Delhi, when we studied together in 1949-50. He agrees and realises that, in response to my query about a serious student of spirituality, he could not think of a Sikh who could associate with me in devotion to Guru Granth Sahib. But he has a friend in Carol, who, he thinks, is deeply drenched in love of God. AND HE IS RIGHT.

I invite her to my daughter's house and introduce to her one of the SANCHIS which I have taken with me to Seattle. And while I read the messages, translate them and quote the Saints and Gurus who have written and talk about their lives and devotion as Sikhs and as Gurus, she is overwhelmed and asks me in an ASTONISHED countenance: "How is it that you say that you have no personal Guru? I am astonished that you have this kind of devotion without any personal Guru?"

"Don't be surprised", I tell her for, after all her Guru is also not always by her side. She lives only by his commands whether in his presence or when he is away in another town. We have satsang a number of times, sometimes extending to 7-8 hours. When I leave Seattle, she runs to Vancouver, acquires four volumes in English of Dr. Gopal Singh's translation of our Shabad Guru and is entrenched in the beauty, splendour, versatility and universality of our Sacred Scripture, which most Sikhs only adore outwardly either in Gurdwaras or in homes or parade their Guru in 5-Star hotels, on marriages and other functions showing scant respect in their daily lives to its commands.

I ask my Guru:

-Are you Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or you BELONG TO ALL MANKIND?

-Is Your Majesty concerned only with my robes or external obeisance or you expect me to listen to you and live your commands?

-Am I in any way superior to others who have different systems of prayer?

-Are you not completely universal and transmit the same message to a Sikh as you give to others?

-While it is privilege for me as a Sikh to take amrit and belong to you, do you refuse to bestow your love on those who listen to you with respect and abide by your command in their daily lives?

-Are not Naamdev, Farid, Kabir, Ravidas and other saints entitled to receive my devotion to their sayings in the same fashion as your commands?

IF YOUR ANSWERS ARE STRESSING UNIVERSALITY AND ONENESS AND ARE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING, WHAT AM I QUARRELING ABOUT?

-Ham nahin change bura nahin koe (I am not good; no one is bad)

-Why am I haughty, then?

-No ko mera dushman reha, na ham kiske bairai

(No one is now my enemy, nor am I alien to anyone)

Why is my Sikh brother, then alien to me?

-Sab ko meet ham aapan keena, ham sabna ke sajan,

(I have made everyone my friend and I have become the friend of everyone)

-Why do I run to courts or shout at home and in streets like a mad dog?

-Jau tau prem khelan ka chao, sir dhar tali gali meri aao.

(If you want the game of love, come with your head on your palm)

-Then, how is it that gurdwara Presidents are mostly those who do not even know how to appreciate the messages that you give, leave aside their other un-Sikh activities?

You will say that I am becoming impertinent. No, father, No. I just wish to seek your guidance in how to make it possible for myself to live the message you say is for all varnas and, as I have seen, for all Mankind. Then if I have been able to live it, how to spread it to the whole world because I HAVE, BY

MY SHAMEFUL CONDUCT AND NEGLIGENT OUTLOOK, put you in a narrow enclosure of limited use. I do not let you enter my heart. I do not let you enter my business. I do not let you enter my PRIVATE life. I do not let you guide me in anything. I BECOME YOUR GUIDE by parading you for the sake of money, for AKHAND PAATHS of monetary sale, for external show of piety and purity. WOULD YOU NOT, NEAR YOUR FIRST PRAKASH DAY LEAD ME INTO YOUR INNER RECESSES AND LET ME SHARE FROM YOU THE REASON WHY GURU GOBIND SINGH ORDAINED YOU AS PERPETUAL GURU?

Yes, you will because you never refuse your children! I have got the answer. your smile shows that I know what is lacking in me. I LACK LOVE which alone melts your heart. And if I begin to love, I shall see the truth of your command: KAR KIRPA JAU SATGUR MILIO, MANN MANDIR MEIN DEEPAK JALIO (When with his grace, I met my Guru, A LAMP WAS LIT IN MY HEART). THIS IS GURU GRANTH SAHIB!

An Open Letter To S.S. Mann

Continued from page 4

under no circumstance is damaged. This central power of Sikh community is an eternal requirement for it.

Our constitution is based on democratic system which means rule of majority. What we have experienced in the past 42 years of independence is that minorities have been and will remain at the mercy of the majority community. If the government at the Centre is formed by non-communal persons, the minorities will get justice but if it is communal and partisan, only the minorities will suffer. This is what our community has experienced at the cost of its blood and destruction of Hari Mandir Sahib, and demoralization and discouragement to remain in the shape and shine of Khalsa 'roop'.

Under the last regime which dominated the parliament with its brute majority have proved that it can deny justice to the minorities even if a large section of Indian population is against it. The outcome of Operation Bluestar and black laws proves the fact that the rule of democracy in India is not similar to one which is practised in

other parts of the democratic world. We must rest contented only after getting the lacuna removed, otherwise we can be subjected to the communal-minded and partisan rule any time. Therefore, the agreement of 1929 should be reopened and we should obtain unambiguous right to protect the Sikh way of life. Prevention of Misuse of Religious Places Act of 1988 must be repealed barring its one clause that says no religious place would be allowed to store arms and ammunition.

It is urgent that the militants are brought in the national mainstream and private terrorism is brought to an end. The national leaders must be urged to examine agreement of 1929 and the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to meet the basic requirements of the community. This is the only approach which will morally force the section of Sikhs, who have established their belief in the concept of Khalistan to ensure the dignity of the Sikh community throughout India, to abandon it.

It may be examined to provide an effective leadership to the Sikh community through a presidium. This is most likely to bring all Akali factions under one umbrella, thus

establishing stability in the community. This leadership, which will enjoy the confidence of the Sikh masses, can effectively start a dialogue with the Central government. The status of Akal Takht be maintained under all circumstances. This is to ensure the existence of Miri and Piri. It is important that at this juncture you, along with others from your group, display your respect to the present Jathedar Akal Takht and recognize his authority publicly.

Lastly, there will be forces who will be working to run down your stature that you have acquired at the national level. But you should get neither deterred nor deviated from your path of serving the community within the limits of our constitution. The existence of a few selfish persons would always be there. But ultimately they will meet their doom.

However, joint efforts between you and S. Prakash Singh Badal should enable us to see militant youth organizations' cooperation in solving the Punjab problem within the framework of the constitution.

Yours sincerely,
Lt. Col. Manohar Singh (Retd.)

Training In Seed Science

By Neera Swaroop

"We are determined to accord the highest priority to agriculture in the Eighth Five Year Plan. Agricultural growth must be accelerated", declared Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi while presenting the new agriculture package in the Lok Sabha on October 12, 1989. Referring to seeds, the Prime Minister said, "Good seeds are the basic foundation of higher agricultural productivity. The New Seed Policy is under implementation and the buffer stocks being built will ensure that Kisans have access to high quality seeds and planting material at reasonable prices".

Seeds play a crucial role in our agricultural strategy. The high yielding and improved seeds, being developed in the research farms; are aimed at increasing yields, shortening crop duration, reducing reliance on moisture and stepping up resistance to pests and diseases.

Once such a nucleus seed is

produced, the process of multiplying it millionfold for distributing to the farmers involves a large number of operations like the transfer of technical knowhow involving multiplication of breeder, quality control in the seed godowns, training in the standards of certification with regard to purity, viability, germination and seed health, etc.

ing time and methods, etc. Adherence to quality norms requires specially trained personnel in the case of seeds.

Training Officials And Farmers

The National Seeds Project (NSP) was launched in the early seventies. As a result of NSP, considerable infrastructure

of the training requirements in this crucial area. At present, there is no arrangement for in-service training of the officials of Seed Industry either in Agricultural Universities or in any other institution for that matter. There is a clear need to up-date and refresh their knowledge as Seed Science is relatively nascent and more and more new information on the subject is steadily becoming available.

Five Year Plan for the construction of the centre, a processing plant and a laboratory in about two hectares of land at the Regional Agricultural Research and Demonstration Centre, Nadwadesh, Varanasi. The grow out testing facilities are to be provided at the Government Seed Multiplication Farm, Kallipur. The modern seed testing laboratory to be set up will have sophisticated equipment. This laboratory, to be initially used for training, will be later converted into the Central Seed Laboratory.

On completion, at least 300 officials will be trained every year besides a large number of seed growers. The training centre will disseminate knowledge of seeds widely and thereby improve the skills of individuals engaged in seeds. Several training courses have been conceived for the officials working in the seed testing laboratories, seed certification and seed law enforcement agencies.

In the words of the Prime Minister, "the interests of agriculture are the interests of the nation. There is no dichotomy between agricultural development and national development. The former is the foundation of the latter".

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Quality Control

Seed quality control assumes great importance as the farmers have to be protected from unscrupulous seed producers and dealers. In addition to the cultural practices associated with crop production, seed producers and supervisors are concerned with isolating fields, plant spacing, fertilisation for seed production, water management, pollination, harvest-


in the seed industry has been created. There are Seed Law Enforcement agencies, Seed Testing Laboratories, Seed Corporations and Seed Certification agencies in most of the States and the Union Territories.

Over eight thousand agricultural scientists and engineering personnel are involved in the country's seed programme directly or through various State level organisations. It indicates the dimension

lied becoming available.

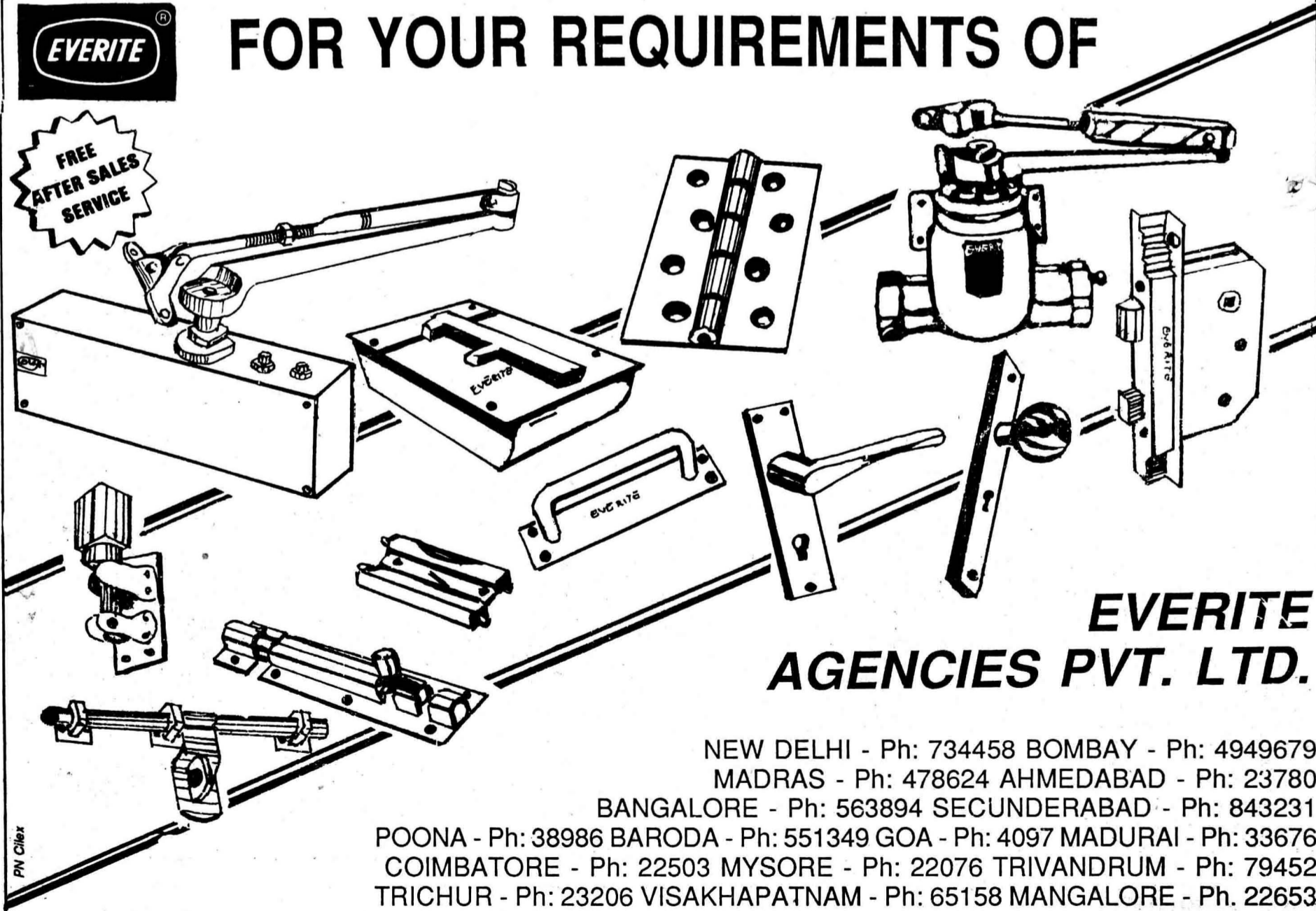
The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) and the NSP World Bank Appraisal Mission (1976 & 1977) have emphasised that training programme in seeds be provided in a planned fashion.

In order to meet the growing training needs, the government has proposed to establish the National Seed Training Centre. Over rupees two crores has been earmarked in the Seventh



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A Husband Dissected

By O.S. Prem

The otherday I found myself in a strange set-up. When I realised where I was, I found myself in the company of women. They came from different strata, numbered a lot but there was one thing common in them, though they had been dressed up in various rainbow colours, made up in a multiple manner various gaits, giggled and babbled differently. Yes, one thing common in them was that they were talking about their husbands. They were whispering "sweet-nothings".

And they felt elated. One of them claimed her husband makes a cup of bed-tea for her daily, the other makes him wash his own clothes at first. The third makes him lay the table. The next wipes off the dust in the drawing room and makes the bed.

And rightly, too, they felt important as it was a ladies' group (there was none to contradict them). And as they felt, they were important no doubt!

If a child is born, the first question mark is, how is the mother and if one gets married, the question asked is how's the bride! And even if death unfolds its wings the only relevant query is what has he left for her!

A Husband is not a rare commodity; He is the most talked about in modern times. And the first topic a woman relishes to speak about is her husband, or a would-be-husband.

Didn't Jane Austin conform that a woman's first & most important aim in life is to find a husband for herself? (Pride and Prejudice).

Husbands are the same all over the world, by and large. Husbands galore! There are numberless, innumerable husbands like mushrooms. Some are strong, dominating, tall and hefty; others lean, soft and henpecked. Some are womanish, too. There are others who are manly and rough in the outside social world but sheepish at home.

But what's a husband in the eyes of a wife? Following are some of responses; many with humour, others with tenderness but each with an interesting insight into the better-half, the husband.

A husband is someone who sells you valuable property when playing Monopoly/ropoly with friends to keep you in the game. He plays chess and uses you as a stake.

He is someone who takes your heart and keeps it safely next to his for ever and a day. But if it comes to breaking, he lets yours to pieces.

A husband is someone who says you look great even when you are in a family-way and look like an Easter egg on legs. May be he does not walk side by side and disassociates himself so easily.

A husband is a gentle giant who holds your adopted baby boy in his arms and says, "our son". Love me, love my dog! Is'nt it?

A husband is someone who buys her chocolates when they quarrel, then eats them himself, when at last they are reconciled and patched up.

He is a man who stands by you through all the troubles you wouldn't have had if you'd stayed single:

"Even after twenty years, it's like

"After a quarter century of married life I still haven't been able to cure him of his bad habits. He still leaves wet towels on the bed and sheds his shoes in the drawing-room, leaving them on my carpet," grumbled one wife.

A husband is one who loves his car more than he does you. If there's anything wrong with the car, you are one who gets all the blame, but if anything happens to you, he doesn't care.

"I guess I have no complaints

But then familiarity breeds contempt. Doesn't it?"

Just the fact that he's there is enough to make you feel good. It's nice knowing there's someone you call you own; and he's the only one you can really call your own. Your own to love, to cuddle, to yell at, to throw things at when you're mad!

A husband is one who automatically assumes that anything he wants to do, you want to do it too. He'll make you a cup of tea min-

such times is, "you should have thought of it". But he takes all the credit for good things.

A husband is one who blames you for anything that goes wrong in the house. His stock phrase at such times is, "you should have thought it". But he takes all the credit for good things.

He calls himself an unpaid servant but I think he's the only labour saving device you can think of.

A husband is a constant element of distraction. He'll breathe down your neck when you're trying to count the stitches in your knitting or concentrating on a difficult errand. When you're busy cooking, with three things on fire at the same time, he'll insist you come and help him look for his misplaced spectacles, which ultimately may be discovered on his nose or in his pockets.

A husband is one who loses his temper if he returns from the office to find you out. Everyone from the servants to the children will get a shouting. But if you are at home, he spends the evening with his files! Perhaps writing an article like this!

A husband is an overgrown baby. He's completely lost without you. Perversely he makes you feel wanted and needed. He is the boss of the house and has the permission of his wife to declare it; he is someone whose views are always respected even if not adhered to. His views in the house are not necessarily the views of the management of the house!

A husband is an overgrown baby. He is completely lost without you. Perversely he makes you feel wanted and needed. He is the boss of the house and he has the permission of his wife to declare it; he is someone whose views are always respected even if not adhered to. His views in the house are not necessarily the views of the management of the house!

eating soup with a fork, I just can't get enough of him. He is a mirage, a will 'o' the Wisp."

A husband is the guy who marries you and looks after your son, and he tells the little guy, "You were the best, so I picked you and they threw Mummy, in, too". He knows his priority!

He promises to clean the fans and windows at the weekend and then takes you out for a movie and lunch on Sunday! And, the worst is, you're so thrilled with the treat that you forget all about his promise!

A husband is one who after 20 years of marriage still does not know where things are kept in house, and how to manage them. He searches tea-leaves where spices are kept.

He hangs around impatiently while dinner is being cooked and disappears when it's served. It's playing hide and seek all along! and then he is found tall-talking on the phone.

A husband is one who leaves the maternity ward with a look in his eyes which says "You're the only one who has ever had a baby."

A husband is one who does all the right things at the wrong time, and the wrong things at the right time. He never comments upon the new dress you bought say whether he likes it or not, or even notice when you wear it. But the day you lend it to your sister to wear, he turns around and says, "Hey, don't you have a dress something like this?"

A husband is one who gets a VIP treatment at you parent's home; he's treated like he was the only son-in-law in the world. Nobody gives you any credit for the fact that if it hadn't been for you he wouldn't have been a son-in-law at all.

about life without my husband, but then it's not really life without him, is it?"

A husband is an outlet for all your tensions. You relieve all your pent up anger, frustrations and emotions on him.

"A husband is one whose arrival after an absence arrives all cribs against him out of my head;

utes after you've had one. He doesn't bother to ask you whether you'd like one. But his thoughtless actions are always borne out of consideration for you. He assumes you feel like a cup of tea just because he feels like one.

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Film Storyteller's New Language

The story has come a long, long way. In the beginning it was the spoken word that handed a story down, from one generation to the next. Relying heavily on memory, the oral tradition was, more often than not, coloured by time and the storyteller's personality. As the art of writing, calligraphy, evolved, events, stories, even epics and drama, could be recorded—though for a limited readership. And then came the printing press in the seventeenth century, which heralded the age of mass communication. Literature developed as never before as books were produced on a mass scale. And an awareness grew of the special needs of children. By the nineteenth century, children's literature had emerged in Europe as a specific literary form. The twentieth century perfected book production techniques to make the book an attractive package—of fiction or non fiction—for all ages.

The twentieth century has among other things, also seen the dramatic arrival of the audio visual medium in the form of cinema. It offered the storyteller a new language and a new medium. The new medium gave a new dimension to storytelling. Both the 'sit back and enjoy' film which demands little audience participation and the 'think' film with open endings that fire the imagination, have had a tremendous impact on all ages, and attracted mass viewership. Children, too, took to the new art form readily and spontaneously.

Indeed, the art of the film is different from that of literature. It is agreed that often second class novels make first class films—and vice versa. A film is based on a written story, but changes have to be made to suit the screen. The written word can always be successfully adapted for cinema, if the theme is powerful and effective. This is as true of children's fiction

By Nita Berry

as of adult literature.

Effective Art Form

The film's limited length demands a general compression of the story. Action must necessarily be dramatic with crisp dialogues and incidents. The film maker cannot afford to be superfluous. Viewed through a lens a story can indeed gain new depth. The camera's moving eye—eloquent photography—the interweaving of colours—sombre or brilliant or stark black and white imagery—close ups, facial expressions etc. all backed by nuances of sound, have made the film an astonishingly effective art form.

In the hands of a master the technique becomes "so fine and complicated that it is able to illum-

inate the human soul much more strongly, to reveal much more ruthlessly, and cover new realms of reality of which we are ignorant"—Bergman.

It is a heartening development that in India, too, children's films for the small and the silver screen are being given deserved attention by film producers. Since a strong storyline must form the base of a good children's film, children's writers and publishers provide a good fund of ideas for film makers.

Children's Book Trust has pioneered the publication of effective value based stories for the present child reader. Over the years, their stories of adventure, science fiction, history, folk tales etc. have proved their growing popularity.

Writer Director Nexus

However, a few problems have been thrown up regarding the filming of children's stories. The language of a film has to be different from the language of the written book. A film tells the story mainly through action. And it is definitely the prerogative of the director to depict the action the way he considers best. It is exactly here where there is chance of misrepresentation. One should never forget the basic fact that it is the story that has come first. And as such, the writer's interpretation of his characters and the way he delineates them through his words are not only important but sacred to him. There should be no conflict if the Director conforms to the concept and picture that the writer had in mind of the characters and incidents. It is his duty to adapt the medium to suit the story. Not vice-versa. Of course, the limitations of the medium have to be reckoned with by both. But the fact remains that the film medium is quite viable and pliable.

It is, therefore, advisable to involve the writer of the story, the creator of the characters and incidents, in the making of the film wherever possible and also to the extent possible. Perhaps the two-in-one syndrome, not so uncommon these days, is the other and more preferable alternative. But then it could not be considered the general rule though.

Child Artistes

The selection of child artistes is another problem that a children's film maker has invariably to face. The limited number of child artistes at present available feature in most of the children's films produced in the country. The same is the case with other characters like mothers and grandmothers. It would appear that the characters have been moulded according to the artistes available.

Technical Aspects

The quality of children's films produced in India leaves much to be desired. The colours are drab, sometimes blurred, and filming is often shoddy.

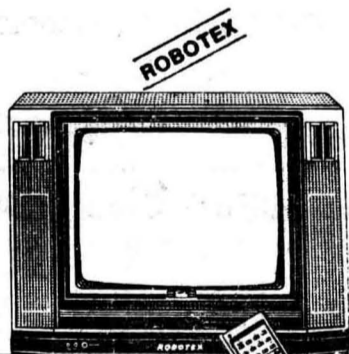
If the written word can say it all in a few words, the visual medium of film can indeed say it in less number of words, with the backing of the finer techniques of cinematography. Why must a 'message' or moral be hammered in, even in films meant to entertain? The unsaid can be more eloquent. Even for the child viewer, why not leave an open ending that can activate thought and imagination?

As writers and film makers seek to provide better books and films for children, a better coordination of their efforts would surely result in the preparation of good scripts and wholesome and value-based children's films.

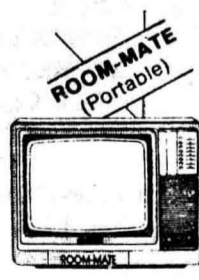
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